Relationship Between School Enrollment Patterns And Academic Achievement In Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine if there was any difference in academic achievement between two categories of students enrolled at different times in Tanzania by employing both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative analysis indicated that the second category performed significantly lower in their examinations than the first category; That is, -18.8>-1.96 for a two tailed Z-test. The same category of students performed lower than the first one when the examination results were segregated according to the year of study or subject-wise. Qualitative data indicated that deviant behaviors undesirable for students learning were associated with greater number of students from the second category than the first one. Thus, the researchers highlighted that enrolling all students at once should be viewed as one of the important strategies for improving the performance of the secondary school students.

Keywords: Second selection, academic achievement, deviant behavior

1. INTRODUCTION

The government of Tanzania has increased effort to ensure that both primary and secondary education is more accessible to low-income families and rural populations. Three major programs so far implemented are Primary Education Development Program (PEDP) since 2000, first Secondary Education Development program (SEDP-I) since 2004 and Secondary Education Development program (SEDP-11) from 2010-2015. The three programs contributed to the reduction of amount of fees in secondary schools and giving free education in primary levels and these resulted to increase in number of children in primary schools and eventually in secondary schools.

According to the data from the ministry of education and vocational training through its committee of basic education development (2008), enrolment rates in primary schools rose from 65.5% -96.1% between 2001 – 2006 while net enrolment rates in Secondary schools rose from 5.9% in 2004 to 20.6% in 2007. The number continued to increase as for another period of four years, enrolment in primary schools increased by 5.8% from 7,959,884 pupils in 2006 to 8,419,305 pupils in 2010 whereas in secondary schools the increase was by 143%; from 675,672 students in 2006 to 1,638,699 students in 2010. But in the government secondary schools alone, enrolment increased by 186% from 490,492 in 2006 to 1,401,330 in 2010 (MOEVT, 2010) Thus, increased enrolment rate in secondary schools is not only the result of increased number of standard seven leavers but also due to the government's initiatives for constructing at least one secondary school for each ward all over the country. These newly constructed schools intensified the challenges that the government has been facing over years mainly shortage of both human and material resources such as study materials, enough number of teachers and the furniture like chairs and laboratory equipments for science subjects like physics and chemistry (Education sector development committee, 2008).

These challenges brought the government to a point of admitting students in two sessions to join secondary education as a strategy for sharing the limited resources especially classrooms as most of them were still under construction. These sessions include the first session which is conducted at the beginning of the academic year and the second selection which is conducted in June in most of the government secondary schools. The two sessions of admitting students make two categories of students in schools. Although second selection is still practiced in Tanzania one of the important goals of SEDP-II is to ensure good quality secondary education as it is a prerequisite for good quality human life, labor skills and economic productivity (MOEVT, 2010). Since these two categories of students get admitted in schools at different times, they also adapt the formal studies and the psycho-social environments of the school differently. This may affect their academic performance as studies show that students' performance is influenced by the students' school attendances (Golding, 2011; Weimer, 2012).

Thus, it seems that there may exist a difference in students' performance because of the difference in learning time between the two categories. This is by putting into consideration that students need some time to adapt the school environment if learning is to be effective as it has been observed that when a child is facing a new learning environment he/she faces problems (Ito et al., 1213). These students leave primary schools and get to secondary schools where they meet different peer groups, teachers and academic environments.

In Tanzanian context, students use Kiswahili as a medium of instruction in primary schools and when they get into secondary schools, suddenly English becomes a medium of instruction in all their subjects. Study by Vuzo (2007) shows that most of our teachers are not competent in English language and this bring a hard task for them to supervise well learners to practice this language which is the main engine for students to understand the subjects. This scenario in secondary schools may create more tension on the second category of students which may be struggling not only with the language barrier but also to accommodate the concepts of the rest of the subjects already covered by the first category of students. However, it is not easy to be concluded that admitting students in different times disfavor the second category because some research data fail to provide evidence that increasing school learning time leads to improved students' performance (Marcotte and Hansen, 2010). Thus, there was a need of conducting a study to investigate the academic progress of the second category of students in comparison with the first category in the government ordinary level secondary schools.

2. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

− There is no significant difference in performance between the first and second categories of students in the ordinary level secondary schools.

– There was no significant difference in performance between the two categories of students if the examination results are segregated according to the year of study.

– There was no significant difference in performance between the two categories of students if the examination results are segregated subject wise.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Research shows that second selection has been practiced in many education institutions for various purposes such as filling gaps for student who drop the school and there is no any official information reported to the schools' management, also it may be done in order to accomplish certain education policy and the third reason can be due to demand of the community to have certain program to solve the existing need (Crul, 2004). In Tanzania, The time difference between the first and the second selection pose a significant challenge to the students of the second category because it has been observed that according to the nature of the school syllabus there seems to be time constraints in teaching and learning (Galabawa, 2000). Also, it is at a secondary school level where English is used as a medium of instruction while in primary schools Kiswahili is used so. Thus, if it is put into consideration that it is in language that the business of schooling is primarily accomplished (Gee, 1992); the second category of students are likely to face more psychosocial problems compared to the first category as it was once observed that it is more difficult for students to cope with the foreign language if the face to face contact hours with teachers are very few during the years of compulsory schooling (Crul, 2004).

Under this condition, the competitive school environment may often set the students of the second category into elevated levels of anxiety. Students with anxiety often have negative views about their ability to cope with stressful academic situations as they believe that they do not have the skills necessary to cope with a particular threat (Wolfe, 2005). This situation may be magnified by the fact that the time the students were out of school retarded their academic ability research discovers that percentage of students' achievement on mathematics drop considerably for each day as the school remains closed (Spradlin et al., 2012). If these circumstances contribute to decreased performance of the students of the second category, they are also likely to be more vulnerable to undesirable behaviors for learning such as absenteeism, school dropout, disobedience, bullying, laziness, isolation etc (Goodman and Gregg, 2010). Also, Chiu (1993) suggests that 22% of the academic performance is influenced by the attendance. Another study reports that, students with poor attendances often choose to sit out of activities and not involved in social activities with their mates. They choose to avoid any form of situation where critics are involved and constant reassurance is required (Foxman, 2004). They have also higher risky of developing depression and often experience demoralized condition (Cunningham, 2008). Thus academic anxiety have negative impact on students well being.

Possibility of deviant behavior for this category of students is mostly attributed to their lowered confidence; a condition which may need emotional support because students with such needs feel as though other students do not like them when most of time could be uneasiness brought about by their lack of social skills (Best, 2009).

Considering the problem of teacher shortage in secondary schools, time is not only affecting learners but also teachers since the time needed to develop the material is considerable and that the development of learning objectives along with corresponding formative test and corrective activities is the burden of teachers (Wambugu, 2007). This means what can limit the academic progress of the second category can be on the side of students and teachers as well; as both teaching and learning depends on teachers (FRN, 2004 p. 39). Also, over time pupils' academic performance in both internal and external examinations had been used to determine excellence in teachers and teaching (Akiri & Ugborugbo, 2009).

Thus, students' academic achievement is mostly a product of mutual cooperation between teachers and students in schools. This implies that while teachers pursue their normal responsibilities in schools they also have to deal with students with psychosocial problems. For instance, Sze (2006) suggested a few strategies a teacher can use to include students with academic anxiety include: breaking up tasks into smaller more attainable chunks, which allows more opportunity for success more often, and therefore promotes positivity and encouragement. Provides examples and specific steps to accomplish tasks; reduces assignment length so that students strive for quality rather than quantity (Sze, 2006). Other anxiety reducing strategies including the use of flash cards for students to synthesize information from texts and lectures and learn good study habits; and to teach test-taking skills (Lagares and Connor, 2009). Teachers can use collaborative learning more and more to promote student learning and reduce student's anxiety associated to learning and testing (Ioannou & Artino, 2010). In Tanzanian context there is no evidence whether such strategies are practiced in schools as a mechanism for helping the students of the second category; hence the reason for this study.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study investigated the academic progress of students of the second category in comparison with students of the first category. A mixed research design was employed. A mixed research design focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies (Creswell, 2009). Quantitative approach was used because the research dealt with the objectives that needed examination results mainly when comparing the academic achievements of the first and the second categories of students, according to their years of study and subject wise. On the other hand qualitative information was employed when exploring details of the students' psycho-social behavior relevant for students learning for the two categories of students.

4.1 POPULATION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Population targeted was community or government secondary schools in Morogoro region as they practice second selection in form one. This is by considering that, population is referred to as entire group of persons or elements that have at least one thing in common (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Although second selection is practiced in almost all regions in the country, it was convenient for the researchers to work with the schools in Morogoro region. Due to dense urban populations compared to that of rural areas, second selection is mostly dominant in urban secondary schools. Thus, for the purpose of this study the researchers selected Mgulasi, kayenzi, mwembesongo and morogoro ordinary level secondary schools found in Morogoro Municipality. These schools were purposively selected because they had been practicing second selection for a period of more than four years and they were still doing so by the time this research was being conducted. This condition was important so that the researchers could compare academic achievement of the two categories of students from form one to four.

If a school had got only a single stream for each of the two categories, all of the students in the two streams were sampled for the study as long as the total number of students was not less than 80; that is, 40 students from each category per school. This was the case for one of the schools. For the rest of the three schools, the total number of students sampled per school was 140; that is, 70 students were sampled randomly for each category. These figures were selected by putting into consideration that all students of the second category in two of the schools were sampled as they were few compared to those of the first category. This was to ensure that equal number of students for each category per school was selected in order to simplify the analysis process. This made a total of 500 students selected from the four schools; 250 students from each category.

Also, three teachers from each school were sampled purposely; firstly, class teachers from each of the two categories of students who had information on students records such as attendance, punctuality and exceptional or any deviant behavior of the students in their respective classes; secondly, the academic master who monitor and keep records of students academic progress. Hence, from the four schools a total number of 12 teachers were sampled for the study as presented in the table 1 below.

Table: 1: Sample size

Schools	Number of students in the 1st category	Number of students in the 2nd category	Number of teachers	Total
Kayenzi	40	40	3	83
Mgulasi	70	70	3	143
Morogoro	70	70	3	143
Mwembesongo	70	70	3	143
Total	250	250	12	512

5. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data collection relied on the analysis of the examination results and interviewing both teachers and students.

Written information

The researchers collected both National form two, form four and the rest of the two years school based annual examination results of the sampled students for the specified subjects i.e. English, mathematics and biology from the sampled schools. These subjects were some of the compulsory subjects in secondary schools that were taken by all students from form one to form four and thus easier to be used in determining their academic progress.

After noting the names of the sampled students from the released copies of the examination results; the researchers prepared another list that summarized the names of the sampled students with their respective examination results of the three subjects for each of the four years. In order to compare the performance of these two categories, these examination results were analyzed through the statistical test that was suitable for this study; that is, Z-test as the sample size was greater than 30 (Kothari, 2004). The formula used to calculate the Z-test value was: $Z\text{-test} = X_1 - X_2 / ((Q1^2 - Q2^2)/n)^{0.5}$; Where: Q1= standard deviation for category one, Q_2=standard deviation for category two, n:=sample size, X_1= mean for first category, X2=mean for second category. Since the stated hypotheses were two tailed while the calculated Z-test value was greater than the theoretical value of +-1.96 at 0.05 significance level, then the null hypothesis was rejected; i.e. the existing difference was considered to be significant.

Interview

Semi-structured interview was used as a means of supporting the information gathered through examination results. The two researchers were dealing with each of the sampled teachers and students at the same time but only one of the researchers asked the questions of the interview guide although each researcher noted the responses in the respective sheet. Since, the interview guide was semi-structured each researcher could probe independently for further clarification. The information obtained was used to support interpretation of the analyzed examination results. The interview guide involved items that investigated deviant behaviors like truancy, rudeness, fighting, dirtiness, laziness, abusive languages, depression, loneliness, isolation, fear and negative attitude towards academic achievement so as to illuminate the extent such behavior could be attributed with either category of students. Also, the interview explored teachers' attitudes towards academic and social progress of the two categories. The responses were merged together after the interview and analyzed through content analysis.

6. FINDINGS

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in performance between the first and second categories of students in government O -level secondary schools.

Since the values 1, 2, 3 and 4 represent the grades A, B, C and D respectively, the lowest average values in the tabulated findings represent the highest grades whereas the lowest average values represent the lowest grades. Table 2 shows that the mean value including both the maximum and minimum average values for the first category of students are lower than those of the second category. This means that the number of students who scored the highest grades from the first category was bigger than that of the second category. Likewise, the number of students who scored the lowest grades from the first category was smaller than that of the second category. The difference in general performance between these two categories was statistically significant because the   calculated Z-test statistic value (-18.8) is in the rejection region of the normal distribution curve as it is bigger than the theoretical value of +-1.96 at 0.05 significance level. That is, -18.8>-1.96 for a two tailed Z-test.

Table 2: Comparison of the general performance between the two categories

Category	N	Minimum Average	Maximum Average	Mean	Std. Deviation	Z-test Statistic
1st category	250	2.42	4.83	3.6100	.45762	-18.8
2nd category	250	2.92	5.00	4.3762	.45640	

Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in performance between the first and second categories of students in ordinary level secondary schools is rejected because the first category of students have performed significantly better than the second category.

Hypothesis: There was no significant difference in performance between the two categories of students if the examination results are segregated according to the year of study.

Table 3 shows that at form one; the mean value and the minimum average value for the first category of students are lower than those of the second category. This means that the number of students who scored the highest grades from the first category was bigger than that of the second category. Since the calculated Z-test statistic (-8.422) > theoretical value (+-1.96), there was a significant difference in performance between the first and second categories of students in form one.

At form two; the mean value and the minimum average value for the first category of students are lower than those of the second category. This means that the number of students who scored the highest grades from the first category was bigger than that of the second category. But the calculated Z-test statistic (0.97) < theoretical value (+-1.96); thus, there was no significant difference in performance between the first and second categories of students in form one.

At form three; the mean value and the minimum average value for the first category of students are lower than those of the second category. This means that the number of students who scored the highest grades from the first category was bigger than that of the second category. Since the calculated Z-test statistic (-8.4937) > theoretical value (+-1.96), there was a significant difference in performance between the first and second categories of students in form three.

At form four; the mean value and the minimum average value for the first category of students are lower than those of the second category. This also means that the number of students who scored the highest grades from the first category was bigger than that of the second category. Since the calculated Z-test statistic (-14.29) > theoretical value (+-1.96), there was a significant difference in performance between the first and second categories of students in form four.

Table 3: Comparison of the performance between the first and the second category according to the year of study

Form	Category	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Z-test statistic
Form One	1st category	250	2.67	5.00	4.0613	.49620	-8.422
	2nd category	250	3.00	5.00	4.4122	.43482	
Form Two	1st category	250	2.33	5.00	3.6613	.60432	0.97
	2nd category	250	3.33	5.00	3.7047	.40702	
Form Three	1st category	250	2.67	5.00	4.0613	.49620	-8.4937
	2nd category	250	3.00	5.00	4.4122	.43482	
Form Four	1st category	250	2.67	5.00	4.0309	.55573	-14.29
	2nd category	250	3.33	5.00	4.6247	.34519	

Hypothesis: There was no significant difference in performance between the two categories of students if the examination results are segregated subject wise.

If the results are segregated according to three subjects as shown in Table 4; English, Biology and Mathematics, the mean and the minimum average values for the first category of students are lower than those of the second category. This means that the number of students who scored the highest grades for the mentioned subjects from the first category was bigger than that of the second category. Also, the calculated Z-test statistics (-11.07, -10.43 and -12.55) > theoretical value (+-1.96) at 0.05 significance level; It means there was a significant difference in performance between the first and second categories of students for the named subjects. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in performance between the two categories when the results are segregated subject-wise was rejected.

Table 4: Comparison of the performance between the first and the second category subject wise

Form	Category	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Z-test Statistic
English	1st category	250	2.00	5.00	3.7690	.61105	-11.07
	2nd category	250	2.75	5.00	4.3243	.49489	
Biology	1st category	250	2.00	5.00	3.7700	.61368	-10.43
	2nd category	250	2.75	5.00	4.3054	.53089	
Mathematics	1st category	250	2.25	5.00	3.5990	.67548	-12.55
	2nd category	250	2.75	5.00	4.2741	.51792	

When the differences in mean values between the two groups are considered for the three subjects; it shows that the difference in performance between the two categories was the highest in Mathematics when compared to the other two subjects. The values are: 0.6751, 0.5553 and 0.5354 for Mathematics, English and Biology respectively. This means performance of the second category was poorer in Mathematics compared to the other subjects.

6.1 INTERVIEW RESPONSES

The researchers wanted to know if the subject teachers had noticed any difference regarding activeness during classroom learning. The teachers responses was that both categories have a mixture of active and less active students but the second category has greater number of less active students compared to the first category. One of the mathematics teachers added that:

"I do take longer time to prepare lessons for the first category than for the second one as I know that it is possible to cover more content and there is possibility of encountering more challenges from the first category. It means even the nature of assignments that I give for students to practice either in the classroom or as homework are sometimes different".

Concerning the students' classroom, teachers exhibited that classrooms of the second selection make a lot of noise for any time they are left without a teacher. Even when teaching, the students need constant supervision as most of them are less attentive and can not concentrate for a considerable time on a single activity or teachers instruction without intervening with their own business such as stories, movements or jokes".

When the teachers wanted to demonstrate inefficiency of the students from the second category in accomplishing classroom activities, they revealed that most of them get problems when performing both individual and group activities because they don't spend much of their efforts searching for knowledge from various sources. Thus, they used to have less regular time table for self study and also less permanent working groups.

The teachers showed that most of the second category students seemed to have low expectations and they are less certain about the possibility of performing well in their final examinations.For instance, one student from

the second category was asked by his teacher about what he aspired to become as a result of schooling; the response was:

"Since, I do not expect to be able to score higher marks in the National examinations; probably, I will join teaching or vocational studies. It should be considered that what we are studying now has already been covered by our fellow students of the first category several months ago; and we need to cover the same materials as we will sit for the same final examinations".

Following this response from students, the researchers were interested to here the way other students from both categories would respond towards the same question. Although there were also some students from the second category with high expectations and also some students from the first category with low expectations, the interesting observation was that responses from 7 students out of 8 students from the second category who were asked such a question were related with the shortened school time following second selection.

The researchers further observed that the teachers who were responsible with the school discipline could associate second selection with discipline cases. Although the teachers admitted that there were no proper records regarding discipline issues, the researchers could identify some documented cases. For example, 42 students could be identified to have dropped out of the four schools in a period of three years, but only 12 of them were from the first category. Also, 37 students could be identified by the researchers to have been suspended from studies in the four schools over the same period of time due to various reasons, but only 8 of them were from the first category. The reasons given by teachers for suspension involved extremely poor school attendance, the use of abusive languages to teachers and their fellow students, stealing, inability to be punctual, disobeying punishments and aggressive behavior to others.

Also, one of the class teachers who wanted to know from students point of view the reason why he had very poor school attendance record despite the time shortage, she reported the student's response as:

"Madam, I know you want me attend the school regularly, but I do not understand the subjects in secondary school. Before I joined the school, I used to sell groundnuts in the market places where I could get a lot of money. So, I do continue with the business sometimes; and occasionally my parents do benefit from such business".

All these responses demonstrate that teachers were clearly of the view that second selection set students at a disadvantage which limit their academic opportunities.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The mean values of the examination test scores indicate that the first category of students have performed considerably higher than the second category in all the four years for the three subjects. Although the Z-test statistic showed that there was no significant difference in performance between the two categories of students in form two, it could not be concluded that there was a progressive improvement of the second category of students to the extent of performing similar to the first category because there was no evidence in

the subsequent years. The same is reflected in the qualitative data collected where both teachers and students of the second category had low expectation regarding their academic achievement. On the part of students this could be demonstrated when one of the students responded that:

"I do not expect to be able to score higher marks in the National examinations as what we are studying now has already been covered by our fellow students of the first category two months ago".

This indicates that students of the second category are likely to be at a state of higher stress than students from the first category. Thus, challenges facing students from the second category have two faces; one concerned with the limited time and the other due to induced anxiety as they consider themselves helpless. This is by considering the observation that students with anxiety believe that they do not have the skills necessary to cope with a particular threat (Wolfe, 2005). Therefore it was not surprising that low academic abilities observed in the sampled schools were mostly demonstrated by students from the second category; a condition which could not motivate teachers to teach them. This again limited the learning opportunities of the students of the second category because teachers' help as their voluntary initiative was unlikely.

Since the duration between completing primary seven and joining secondary school is considerably different for the two categories of students; the academic abilities of students of the second category were more retarded due to the extra period they were out of the academic environment (Marcotte and Steven, 2008). This may be caused not only by the fact that students were not exposed into the learning environments but also because they were already captured by both social and economic roles as their alternative lifestyles. For the case of Tanzania this may be more serious because the transition period between primary and secondary education consists of some five to six months off from school. According to Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation (2011), this period is too long and allows primary seven leavers practice various forms of behavior; for instance girls marry or get pregnant, keeping them from turning up as secondary school students after the break. This observation demonstrates that second selection which may take place six months later following the first selection normally access pupils who were already too vulnerable to various circumstances potential for hindering their academic opportunities. This means, if for example second selection happens six months later, the admitted pupils might have spent a full year out of the formal schooling. Hence, school life may appear stranger to most of such students than life out of school they were used to. This can partly explain the reason why greater number of students who demonstrated deviant behaviors was from the second category than from the first one. Though such pupils might know that the outcome of their bad conduct may lead to losing their opportunity of formal education, they may wish to drop schooling and enjoy the autonomy of the unstructured life style they had already adapted. Thus, it implies that there are some failure cases at form four which could be avoided had there been no second selection practices in the country.

Therefore if a similar study is carried out by involving greater number of schools and subjects, there would be enough evidence substantiating the extent to which the practice of second selection contribute to the instability of the education quality countrywide. However, since this study has revealed that second selection limits academic progress of some students, the researchers recommend the following:

The government should ensure that community secondary schools are equipped with the necessary resources especially physical infrastructure so that there should be no second selection. Other wise SEDP-II's important goal of ensuring good quality secondary education as a prerequisite for good quality human life, labor skills and economic productivity can not be fulfilled.

The government need to increase the number of teachers in the community secondary schools and motivate them so that schools can run in two sessions per day especially when there is shortage of classroom rather than doing second selection.

If second selection is indispensable, the duration between the two selections should be so short that it is possible to compensate the lost time through extra couching following voluntary agreement between school management, teachers and parents. This should be accompanied by a well planned guidance and counseling sessions especially for students demonstrating deviant behaviors.

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